

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid [998.262]

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Camp Crowder Collection

Abstract: Photographs, newspaper clippings and publications for Camp Crowder during and after World War II (1941-1946) and Fort Crowder U.S. Disciplinary Barracks (1955-1957).

Extent: 2 Cubic Feet

Physical Description: Paper; Photographs; Ephemera

Location: Missouri State Archives; Stacks

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Alternative Formats: JPG and TIF

Access Restrictions: None

Publication Restrictions: Standard copyright rules apply

Preferred Citation: [item description], [date]; *Camp Crowder Collection*, Record Group 998.262; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

Acquisition Information: Gifts; Accession #1997-0131, #1998-0040, #2013-0075, #2016-0150, #2017-0202, #2018-0069, #2019-0030, #2020-0119, #2022-0035, #2022-0045 & #2022-0112

Processing Information: Initial processing and digitization by MSA staff in 2008. Finding aid by EW on 04/19/2017. Updated by EW on 03/10/2021, 04/19/2022 & 05/23/2022.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Camp Crowder was a military installation in Newton and McDonald Counties named in honor of Major General Enoch H. Crowder, Provost Marshal of the United States during World War I and author of the 1917 Selective Service Act. The Camp, located near Neosho, Missouri, was established in 1941. By 1942, the first soldiers arrived at the Signal Corps Replacement Training Center and were trained in forty different military communications specialties involving radio, radar and telephone operation and maintenance. In addition to the signal corps training, the post

trained medical corps soldiers and ground force troops. Camp Crowder also included an Officer Candidate Preparatory School, the first school of its kind in any Army installation. The Camp had a bakery, ordnance motor repair shops, a large laundry and warehouses for supplies. Barracks were segregated. During World War II, a large 2,000-capacity prisoner of war camp existed within the greater Camp Crowder. The mostly German POWs worked within the larger camp, learning trade skills such as butchering, auto mechanics, baking and laundering.

At its peak, Camp Crowder covered over 42,000 acres and housed up to 47,000 soldiers. The grounds included six movie theaters, sixteen chapels, one hospital, 15 smaller infirmaries, three dental clinics, a field house, twenty-two branch sites of the Post Exchange, three beauty parlors, many training facilities, and more. Staff published a newspaper *Camp Crowder Message* (later *The Message*) with a circulation of 15,000. In addition to American soldiers and foreign POWs, Camp Crowder also housed Women's Army Corps (WAC) personnel and American Red Cross offices.

Famous alumni include comedian/writer/producer Carl Reiner, *Beetle Bailey* cartoonist Mort Walker and entertainer Danny Talkov. After training tens of thousands of soldiers for World War II and employing thousands of civilians, Camp Crowder was deactivated on January 13, 1947.

In the early 1950s, U.S. Representative Dewey Short successfully lobbied to re-open the facility, this time as a disciplinary barracks. Fort Crowder U.S. Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) received its first military prisoners on August 4, 1953. Col. Herman H. Reed served as the first Commandant. The USDB had a capacity of 1,500 prisoners who were trained in various vocations, such as furniture upholstering, auto mechanics, shoe repair, leatherworking, graphic arts, sheet metal work and farming. The USDB closed on January 31, 1958.

In 1956, part of the former Camp Crowder was sectioned off and transferred to the United States Air Force as Air Force Plant No. 65. From 1957-1973, the Air Force tested rocket engines at the Rocketdyne-run site, including rockets used in the Mercury and Gemini Space Programs. The site was sectioned into the Manufacturing Plant Area, the Components Test Area, the Engine Test Area and the Quince Road Area. The Test Areas were sold individually to private firms over time.

Other parts of the grounds formerly belonging to Camp Crowder and Fort Crowder USDB were sold and a public community college called Crowder College opened its doors in its stead in 1963, which is still in operation. The remainder of the land now belongs to the Missouri National Guard.

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Related Collections

MS398 Missouri Postcard Collection
RG101 Office of Administration
RG953 U.S. Works Project Administration

Additional External Resources

The Library of Congress holds approximately 200 personal narratives, at least 43 photographs and 14 periodicals concerning Camp Crowder.

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia maintains the following collections:

[#C1046 Enoch H. Crowder Papers, 1884-1942](#)

[#C3551 U.S. Work Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey, Missouri, 1935-1942](#)

[#C3665 Schaberg Family Papers, 1894-1974](#)

[#R796 Frank Reynolds Photograph Collection, ca 1925-1942](#)

[#R1255 Paul Sheldon Wise Letters, 1942-1943](#)

[#SL688 Myra Himelhock Papers, 1926-1975](#)

Several oral histories, as well as the papers and photographs of Frederick C. Fagan, are at the [Wisconsin Veterans Museum Library](#).

SERIES

Camp Crowder Photographs and Newspaper Clippings, 1941-1995

Fort Crowder U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photographs, c1955-1957

Camp Crowder Documents, 1942-1944

Camp Crowder Ephemera, 1943-1944

CAMP CROWDER PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, 1941-1995

Extent: 2/3 Cubic Feet

Arrangement: Original order maintained

Scope and Content

This series consists of 392 photographs and 81 corresponding newspaper clippings. The clippings include stories behind the images and range from simple captions to whole articles. The images depict camp life of soldiers, officers, visitors and German Prisoners of War. Celebrities Cary Grant, Benny Goodman and Joe Louis are among the more notable visitors, as is soon-to-be President Harry S Truman.

Many of the photographs also feature – or used to belong to – Staff Sergeant Danny Talkov. Talkov was an entertainer and comedian stationed at Camp Crowder from 1942-1946. He performed under the stage name Danny Tucker and entertained an estimated 500,000 troops and guests during his time there on the stage and radio.

All items, including the newspaper clippings, have been digitized. The public may access JPG images through the Missouri Digital Heritage collection online here:

http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=crowder. Access copies of TIF images are available in-house on the Z Drive. Preservation TIF copies are in the Vault as described below.

Container List

See the Excel spreadsheet for an item-by-item listing.

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	67-68		Photographs and corresponding newspaper clippings	1941-1946
	OB58	7	Sgt. Gerald F. Carr photo album (44 images)	1942-1945
	Drawer 3	4	Three panoramic photograph of Camp Crowder construction workers (2 copies of one)	1941
			Digital scans of photographs, mostly related to S/Sgt. Danny Talkov (aka Danny Tucker). Originals returned to donor.	1942-1995
			Preservation copies of scans of items in Boxes 67-68, OB58 and the map cabinet	1941-1946

FORT CROWDER U.S. DISCIPLINARY BARRACKS PHOTOGRAPHS, c1955-2020

Extent: 1 1/3 Cubic Feet

Arrangement: Original order maintained

Accession: #2020-0119

Scope and Content

This original photograph album was compiled by Master Sergeant and USDB Classification Officer Harold Francis Hewson (1920-1999) and donated to the Archives in 2020 by his granddaughter Debre Coons. Hewson worked at the USDB from 1954-1958. (See container list for Hewson's biography.) The album is bound in leather and has leather section dividers, all of which were made in the USDB's leather shop by the military prisoners. One hundred sixteen of the 119 photographs are glued to black construction paper and many show discoloration. The album was disbound during processing in 2021.

The album has been digitized. JPG images may be found on Missouri Digital Heritage here: http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=crowder. TIF images are available in-house on the Z Drive.

Container List

See the Excel spreadsheet for an item-by-item listing.

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	68	120	1) One-page biography of Harold Francis Hewson written by Debre Coons (c2020). 2) Photocopy of the image on p. 36 of the album identifying Hewson as one of the men in the picture (c1955-1957). 3) Photocopy of a studio portrait of Hewson in uniform (no date). 4) Photocopy of Hewson's medals (no date).	c1955-2020
	OB60	1	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (front cover)	c1957
	OB60	2	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 1-2 (leather divider))	c1957
	OB60	3	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 3-10)	c1955-1957
	OB60	4	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 11-17)	c1955-1957
	OB60	5	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 18-24)	c1955-1957
	OB60	6	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 25-31)	c1955-1957
	OB60	7	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 32-39)	c1955-1957
	OB60	8	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 40-46)	c1955-1957
	OB60	9	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 47-49)	c1955-1957
	OB61	1	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 50-51 (leather divider))	c1957
	OB61	2	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 52-60)	c1955-1957

	OB61	3	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 61-73)	c1955-1957
	OB61	4	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 74-85)	c1955-1957
	OB61	5	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 86-93)	c1955-1957
	OB61	6	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 94-95 (leather divider))	c1957
	OB61	7	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 96-107)	c1955-1957
	OB61	8	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 108-115)	c1955-1957
	OB61	9	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (pp. 116-122)	c1955-1957
	OB62	1	U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Photo Album (back cover and metal rings)	c1957
			Preservation copies of the TIF scans of the album.	

CAMP CROWDER DOCUMENTS, 1942-1946

Extent: Negligible cubic feet

Arrangement: Chronological

Scope and Content

This series contains documents related to Camp Crowder.

Items may be found on Missouri Digital Heritage as JPGs here:

http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=crowder. TIF images are available in-house on the Z Drive.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	68	113	<u>Camp Crowder Midwinter Construction: A Souvenir Booklet Depicting the Construction of Camp Crowder</u> , compiled, edited and illustrated by Don Mayes, Architectural Draftsman, in collaboration with the Burns and McDonnell Engineering Co. Photographs by Ray Hillis of the Architects and Engineers. The booklet once belonged to Clara Morgenthaler who worked at Camp Crowder in the 1940s. The inside cover is signed by many individuals wishing her well. Under copyright.	1942
	67	113	<u>From Reveille to Retreat at Camp Crowder: Your Guide to the Signal Corps Replacement Training Center</u> booklet that originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr	c1942
	67	113	Special Order Number 29: appointments. S.O. by Headquarters, Eighth Signal Training Regiment Central Signal Corps Replacement Training Center. Copy originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr.	03/17/1943
	67	112	Orange wallet card advertising GI War Bonds. Card originally belonged to Technician Fifth Grade Charles P. Plyman.	1943-1944
	67	113	Christmas Dinner 1943 menu – CSCRTC Camp Crowder Missouri. Menu originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr.	12/25/1943
	67	113	Reduced-size facsimile of a letter from Sgt. E.C. Wallace to Sgt. G.F. Carr at Camp Crowder with envelope. Originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr.	04/20/1944
	67	113	United States Army Projection Operator's Permit for Gerald F. Carr	06/30/1944
	67	112	Photocopy of the honorable discharge for Technician Fifth Grade Charles P. Pylman	10/26/1944
	67	112	Newspaper clipping <u>The Lansing State Journal</u> , "5 Brothers Serve" about the Pylman brothers, one of whom (Charles) was stationed in Camp Crowder.	10/30/1944
	67	113	Thanksgiving 1944 Menu – Sixth Signal Service Company	11/23/1944

			Unit Command Army Service Forces Training Center Camp Crowder, Missouri. Menu originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr.	
	67	113	1944 Christmas Menu – B&SC-ASFTC-Camp Crowder MO. Menu originally belonged to Sgt. Gerald F. Carr.	12/25/1944
	67	113	Report of Separation for Sgt. Gerald F. Carr	10/08/1945
	67	113	Letter of recommendation from Cpt. Joseph Henderson for Sgt. Gerald F. Carr addressed To Whom It May Concern	10/08/1945
	67	113	Army Service Forces Class “A” Pass for Gerald F. Carr	Expires 01/01/1946
			Preservation copies of the TIFs of these documents.	

CAMP CROWDER EPHEMERA, 1943-1944

Extent: 1 Pennant

Arrangement: N/a

Scope and Content

This is a pennant that belonged to Corp. Charles P. Pylman when he was stationed at Camp Crowder from 1943-1944. It is textile, made of felt. The United States eagle emblem is on the left, the words "Camp Crowder MO" down the rest of the length. Background is blue. The pennant has been digitized. A JPG image may be found on Missouri Digital Heritage here: http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=crowder. TIF image is available in-house on the Z Drive.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	OB49	2	Camp Crowder pennant <u>24.5" long, 8.25" tall</u>	1943-1944
			Preservation copy of the TIF scan of the pennant	